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bill as it stood, would not have removed all causes of dissention. Half measures or compromises seldom succeed. It is perhaps better that nothing should be done, until the public mind is so enlarged, as to grant freely, ungrudgingly and *without suspicion*. Adversity may possibly at no great distance of time, prepare the way for a more generous and effectual procedure. Until that crisis arrives when nations as well as individuals, "slowly wise," are forced to learn, and who, in any school less severe, would prove truants, we must postpone our hopes of Catholic Emancipation, and Parliamentary Reform, the two grand principles, to which the friends of liberty look, and on which they build their expectations of religious and civil liberty, of substantial peace and stability, and permanent security. On the subject of leaving religious opinions free, the public mind both in Great Britain and Ireland has made great advances in the course of a few years, and it is hoped it will shortly be still farther progressive to the complete removal of all obstacles.

The following book was not published in time to be noticed in the List of New Publications.

Retractions; or, A Review of, and Reply to, a Pamphlet, entitled, "Substance of Two Speeches, delivered in the General Synod of Ulster, at its annual meeting, in 1812, by the Rev. Robert Black, D.D., senior Presbyterian minister of Londonderry; with an account, &c. &c.;" by William Steel Dickson, D.D.

REVIEW.

At the advanced period of the month, when this publication appeared, we have neither time nor room for many remarks.

Many pages are occupied by disputes about words, which, however important to those immediately engaged in the minutiae of the controversy, or to the combatants on either side, are less interesting to the general reader; and this frequently

necessary attention to critical exactness, tends to render controversy dry and fatiguing to those who cannot be expected to enter minutely into the spirit of the contest. In verbal disputations, principle, which ought to be the most important part of the controversy, is not seldom lost sight of. The lines of Pope, quoted by Dr. Dickson, on the occasion are very applicable.

"Divines, like fools, at war about a name,
Have full as oft no meaning, as the same."

After much disquisition on verbal points, our author proceeds to refute most of the charges brought against him by Dr. Black in his speech at the last Synod, and in his subsequent publication reviewed at page 407 of our 52d number. In one instance, Dr. Dickson admits his falling into an error through misinformation, or misconception; but from the other charges, he appears, as far as our limited knowledge of the circumstances of the case extends, to exculpate himself satisfactorily, yet, in the progress of the business, we keep an unprejudiced ear to hear what Dr. Black may have to advance, either in print, or at the approaching Synod.

This work has certainly an interest with the public, founded on the principle at issue, independent of the personal dispute between the parties. The cause of independence, and the best interests of the Dissenting Church are at issue, and on this account we feel ourselves interested, and endeavour to raise a similar interest in our readers, by recommending the present book to their attentive perusal. It remains to be seen, how far the Regium Donum will be found to operate to give a political bias to a religious body, and we acknowledge we have fears on this head, from the line hitherto adopted by Dr. Black and his adherents, whose chief aim appears to be, to throw suspicions on their opponent's political character, and more especially when we read a declaration made in the Presbytery of Bangor, by one of their members, in 1799, that "if the Regium Donum were not withdrawn from Dr. Dickson, they would be considered as inimical to government." Such appears to us the bitter fruits of an ecclesiastical body receiving a demi-establishment from the government. The members necessarily, from the very nature of the connexion, become subservient to their new patrons, and strengthen the in-

jurious and domineering alliance of Church and State.

We have been told, that the people in the Presbyterian church retain the power. By their choice of elders to the ensuing Synod, let them prove whether this power is an empty name. The contest has hitherto chiefly been between the ministers: it appears suitable, that the people, or their representatives, the elders, should decide the question, whether the Synod shall be an independent body, or under the hampering influence of pensions, degenerate into a political club, promoting in their deliberations and decisions, on cases which come before them, the views of government, and crouching to the hands which in part feed them out of the public purse. The following concluding remarks of the pamphlet, on the subject of Elders, are important at the present crisis.

"In respect to the Presbyterian people, I say that they are not without interest in this business, and have a right to take a part in its decision, by their *Elders*. The Elders are the *guardians* of their ecclesiastical rights and privileges, and an essential part of their assemblies, whether legislative or judicial. In all cases, therefore, relative to doctrine, worship, and discipline, as it is their right, it is also their duty to attend, deliberate, speak, and vote, in common with the Ministers. It is, therefore, my earnest wish, and heartfelt desire that this right may be exercised, and this duty performed, in its utmost extent, at the ensuing meeting of Synod; and that every congregation may, not only send to it an Elder, but the Elder best acquainted with the rights, and most firmly attached to the real honor and interests of the Presbyterian cause."

K.

CORRESPONDENCE.

The following letter came too late for insertion among the original communications. Though not exactly suited to this place, at the request of our correspondent, to prevent delay, we make room for it.

To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

IN the Belfast News-Letter of Tuesday the 18th inst. the following article appears. "The Rev. William Vessey, delegate from the London Society for promoting

Christianity amongst the Jews, preached a sermon for the benefit of that institution, on Sunday the 9th current, in the Rev. Wm. Skelly's church, Donaghadee; where the collection amounted to £4 8s. 5d.; and on Sunday last, at Bangor, in the church of the Rev. Mr. Woods, collection £3 5s. 4d. in aid of the same funds!"

On reading the above the following queries were suggested.

1st. If there are any poor in those parishes, did not the above collection rob them of at least a part of what they would otherwise have received?

2d. How many Jews have been *really* converted to the Christian faith by such means, and what sums have been expended thereon; since it would be very desirable to know the price of a Jew's conversion?

3d. How much of the above two sums of £4 8s. 5d. and £3 5s. 4d. will remain to the Missionary Fund, after deducting the Rev. preacher's travelling expenses for coach-hire, eating and drinking &c. &c., and how far will the nett proceeds go in the conversion of one Jew?

7th. Are converted Jews more remarkable for piety, or better members of society, *after* than *before* such conversion?

5th. The proposed conversion of Jews must be effected either by conviction or by pecuniary inducement; if by the former mode, have not all the possible arguments been already exhausted without effect? If by the latter mode, may not the sincerity of such converts be justly questioned?

6th. As there are many sects of Christians, all differing more or less from each other on points of faith which each deem essential to salvation, surely the Jew converts should be at liberty to make their election in a matter of the last importance. Supposing them to choose the Catholic persuasion, would not this absurdity follow, as the law stands at present, that we might with one hand bribe the Jews to become Catholics, and with the other oppress them for being so?

7th. We are certainly much obliged to these Rev. missionaries for their kind annual visits to this country; but as there are no Jews here to be converted by their Sermons, the collection of money must be their only object. And since it is well known, that amongst the circumcised, "de monish are velcome efery vere," would it not be an economical plan for the Missionary Society to open a negotiation with the chiefs, and High-priests of the several synagogues,